

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Farmers in Indonesia rally for
land rights, against seizures
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 76/NO. 40 NOVEMBER 5, 2012

7 new areas have joined subscription campaign!

BY LOUIS MARTIN

More than 650 subscriptions to the *Militant* have been sold since the beginning of our nine-week international subscription campaign. So far, seven new areas have joined the effort for the first time.

READERS ORGANIZE TO SPREAD 'MILITANT' FAR AND WIDE

The campaign runs through Dec. 16. It is rooted in regular door-to-door sales in working-class neighborhoods, with special attention to communities with concentrations of workers who are Black. Over the last few weeks, several readers have joined the effort, introducing the paper to friends and relatives or going door to door with *Militant* distributors.

"The *Militant* is the only paper that told the truth about our struggle," said Shelly Porter at an Oct. 20 campaign meeting in Seattle with James Harris, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate.

Porter is a member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 in Longview, Wash. She was part of an eight-month-long battle in 2011-2012 against an attempt by EGT

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S. Africa: 100,000 miners refuse to end their strikes



Reuters/Siphiwe Sibeko

Strikers against AngloGold Ashanti, Carletonville, South Africa, Oct. 19. Miners make less than \$1,000 a month for 12- to 16-hour days, said miner Tshepo Motloi, "which is totally peanuts."

BY SETH GALINSKY

Some 100,000 gold, platinum, coal, chrome, diamond, and iron miners in South Africa are refusing to go back to work until their demands for substantial pay hikes are met. Some of the strikes began in August, others just in the last few weeks. About 19,000 workers at two gold mines, however, ended their strike after the company threatened to fire them.

All the mine strikes are "unprotected," meaning they have taken place before the expiration of union contracts. In many mines workers have

selected strike committees independent of the established unions.

AngloGold Ashanti, the third largest gold company in the world with operations in 10 countries on four continents, said it would increase

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'Workers need to fight for big gov't-funded jobs program'

BY PAUL PEDERSON

BALTIMORE—"We are entering into the deepest economic crisis that any of us have seen in our lifetimes," James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, told students in a political science class at Coppin State University, a historically Black school, here Oct. 18.

Harris pointed out that unlike the Great Depression in the 1930s this one involves a much greater share of the world's population, including workers and farmers in China, India and Brazil. "All are in it as capitalism enters a real contraction of production," he said.

"But if you watched the debates between President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney neither candidate presented a program to deal with the jobs crisis this contraction has visited on us," Harris said. "That's because they have no jobs program. In parts

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Washington discusses plans to keep troops in Afghanistan through 2024

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In the Oct. 22 election debate, President Barack Obama and his Republican challenger Mitt Romney both pledged to meet the Dec. 31, 2014, deadline for withdrawing U.S. forces from Afghanistan set by the

U.S. military presence in Afghanistan through 2024.

In a talk before a meeting of the International Stability Operations Association in Washington, D.C., Oct. 16, Marc Grossman, the State Department's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, said

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BRING ALL U.S. TROOPS HOME NOW!

—See editorial, p. 11

administration last year. Meanwhile, the Pentagon is drawing up plans to maintain thousands of troops well beyond that date.

In early October, writes Josh Rogin in *Foreign Policy* magazine, "U.S. and Afghan negotiators met in Kabul to talk about the Bilateral Security Agreement that will govern the extension of U.S. troops past 2014."

This meeting was a prelude to the start of formal negotiations to implement the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by Obama and Afghan President Hamid Karzai in May. That pact promised an ongoing

Cops tortured Gerald Reed into 'confession,' jailed him for 22 years

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—"The Chicago police tortured my son into confessing to a crime he did not commit," Armanda Shackelford, the mother of Gerald Reed, told a news conference outside the Cook County Criminal Court Building prior to a hearing on Reed's

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London: 100,000 join march to protest joblessness, gov't austerity



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Persistent unemployment, boss attacks fuel large turnout for Oct. 20 march in London.

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—Some 100,000 people marched here Oct. 20 to protest the impact of rising unemployment and government austerity measures. The Trades Union Congress called the march under the slogan "a future that works," demanding "invest for jobs and growth" and "defend quality public services." It drew large contingents from public sector unions, as well as some workers in private industry and many young people.

The demonstration provided an outlet for tens of thousands to express

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'terror' charges in Minneapolis 6

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'I was expelled by Batista
and embraced by Fidel' 8

‘The fraud of education reform under capitalism’

Below is an excerpt from The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism by Jack Barnes, one of four books offered at reduced prices with a subscription to the Militant. (See ad on page 3.) The book is based on a talk given in April 1993 at a regional socialist educational conference held in Greensboro, N.C. Copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



SUBSCRIPTION SPECIALS

BY JACK BARNES

In the United States today, under capitalism, the only future we can count on is one in which education will worsen—in which education will fuel rather than retard social differentiation. There will only be “education” to squelch curiosity and creativity. There will only be “education” as regimentation. There will only be “education” as preparation to rationalize—or simply resent—class polarization.

I am not saying that everybody involved in education intends for this to happen. There are human beings in this society who are not communists and who are not workers but who genuinely, in their own way, would like to see children and other people have a better education and become more self-confident. I have had some teachers like that, as many of you have. But such

individuals are not the norm, and they cannot and will not change the character of education in bourgeois society.

Instead, people are reduced under capitalism to hoping things will be different for *your* child. *Your* child *somehow* will get a decent education, *somehow* will get to college, *somehow* will not have the desire to learn beaten out of them. *Your* child *somehow* will be able to compete with everybody else and have a better life.

That is what the president of the United States did, isn’t it? Clinton spent nine months campaigning about the importance of public education—and the whole working class knew what the Clintons were going to do when they had to choose a school for their daughter, Chelsea. ... [They] sent her to an exclusive private school in Washington.

Class-conscious workers bore no resentment toward William, Hillary, or Chelsea Clinton because of this decision. Envy of the propertied classes and their spokespersons is not a revolutionary or proletarian trait; it is encouraged not by communists but by fascists. But in watching the Clintons go about selecting a school for their daughter, thinking workers recognized further confirmation of two fundamental realities of class relations under capitalism. First, there is no connection between the values and public policies sanctimoniously espoused by the ruling layers and the lives they and their families lead. Second, there is no such thing as classless “education” in capitalist society; schools for the working class and schools for the ruling class are qualita-



Above, students at DeWitt Clinton High School in Bronx, N.Y., protest mandatory metal detectors, September 2005. Right, a seventh-grader is checked in a Cleveland school. For the working class in the U.S. today, “there is only ‘education’ as regimentation,” Jack Barnes says in book.



tively different things.

If education is not discussed this way, then revolutionaries can never be convincing. If we start where reformers and liberals throughout the capitalist world begin—with *my* children, *my* neighborhood, *my* schools, *my* problems—then we get nowhere. And when the reformers start jabbering about defending *all* children, reach for your wallet and your watch! ...

If we do not explain education under capitalism as a class question (that is, from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, two totally separate and unrelated questions for two different classes); if we do not present working-class schooling as the social destruction of human solidarity, as the organization of a society based on class differentiation, where human beings late in their teens become units of production in the minds of personnel managers and social planners; if we do not point to the fundamental issue of truly universal, lifetime education—if we cannot explain education this way, then we cannot explain it at all.

But understood and explained correctly, there is no more important question for communists. Education as a lifetime experience—I cannot think of a better reason to make a socialist revolution. What better reason to get rid of the capitalist state, to begin transforming humanity, to begin building human solidarity?

This approach to education is what we have to explain to students, to young people, and to others. If they went to school to get a leg up in life, then they

did so due to a misunderstanding—unless they are from a class background that already gives them a leg up, and attended a school that teaches them they deserve it. But youth can be convinced of this working-class perspective, especially as they become active in a few political tussles, and if they haven’t yet been totally coarsened by this society. Young people want to match deeds and words. They still have vitality—they have not had it ground out of them. They can be attracted politically to the working class and communist politics, but only if we argue with them in this way.

Rightist movements, as I said, always try to play on the disappointments and resentments of youth from the lower middle classes or slightly better-off sections of the working class. That is one of the ways fascist movements are built.

“You worked so hard for your education,” they say. “Soon you’ll be raising your children. And now *you’re* going to have to pay more taxes for *their* children and *their* elderly.” And the list of “thems” keeps growing.

I’ve been convinced for a long time that explaining the communist approach to education is part of preparing the working class for the greatest of all battles in the years ahead—the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society, as we collectively educate ourselves and learn the exploiters in the process.

THE MILITANT

Back miners’ fights from W.Va. to S. Africa

In South Africa, miners have been fighting for better wages, safer working conditions and against firings, evictions and deadly cop attacks. In the U.S., miners are battling a major assault by coal barons on their health and pension benefits. Don’t miss a single issue!



United Mine Workers of America Archive/Phil Smith Miners in Charleston, W.Va., protest Patriotic Coal plans to cut health, pension benefits.

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Submissions to the Militant may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

7 new areas join campaign

Continued from front page

Development to keep the ILWU out of its new grain terminal. The company was eventually forced to hire ILWU members.

“At first I thought this was a full-time job for these people,” Porter said, referring to the *Militant’s* worker correspondents who write for the paper and help circulate it. “Then I found out they are workers and do this in their spare time, and this blew me away.”

Porter had initially taken a quota of five for the subscription campaign, putting Longview on the chart for the first time. But at the Seattle meeting, she turned in six new subscriptions, prompting her to raise her quota to eight. “The *Militant* is important to me and I want everyone to read it,” she said.

Members of the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance, a campus group at the University of Texas-Pan American in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas have adopted a goal of 25 subscriptions. Readers from Redding, Calif., and Tampa, Fla., also asked this week that their regions be added to the campaign scoreboard—bringing to seven the total number of areas joining the subscription effort for the first time.

Readers in several areas are still discussing their local quotas in light of initial experiences in the campaign and the political situation that makes possible organizing the biggest subscription effort in years.

Interest in revolutionary course

During a weekend trip to southern Illinois, three *Militant* supporters from Chicago and one from Aurora, Ill., sold six subscriptions to the paper and several books on revolutionary politics going door to door and talking to coal miners, farmers and other workers.

Many knew about the attempt by Peabody Energy and Patriot Coal to slash health and retirement benefits through bankruptcy proceedings. (See “Miners Fight Patriot Coal Plan to Dump Health Care and Pensions” in last

week’s issue.)

Among residents of the area who subscribed to the paper was Joshua Walls, who quit a mining job at American Coal in Galatia, Ill., over unsafe working conditions and has been fighting for six months to get unemployment.

“Safety issues reported to my supervisors were not addressed,” Walls said. “The slope where I worked was dilapidated. This was the secondary escape way for the mine. Roof bolts were rusty and areas had no bolts. We were trying to repair things, but you can’t weld to rust. The fire boss did nothing about this. What if one of my buddies got killed, how could I live with myself?”

The Mine Safety and Health Administration investigation claimed the slope was safe, said Walls.

More and more working people face these kind of experiences, with boss assaults on wages and government attacks on our rights, as the propertied rulers react to the worldwide crisis of capitalism.

At the same time, working-class resistance remains, for now, limited under the pressure of persistently high unemployment and the consequences of decades of collaboration with the bosses, along with support for their political parties, by the labor union officialdom.

On the other hand, far from being demoralized or disinterested, we find a growing interest among working people in a communist explanation of the capitalist crisis and a revolutionary solution to it that is presented in the *Militant* and books on revolution by Pathfinder Press.

We find more working people today, of all nationalities and backgrounds, receptive to the revolutionary conclusions presented in books like *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, which become more relevant as the crisis deepens. The book is one of four titles on special sale at reduced prices with a subscription. (See ad on this page. Beginning with the selection on page 2 this week, the *Militant* will periodically run excerpts from these books.)



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Joshua Walls, left, bought *Militant* subscription from Jorge Rios and Betsy Farley as they were going door to door. Walls quit job at American Coal over unsafe working conditions.

The book, as its introduction explains, is about “why [a] revolutionary conquest of state power by a politically class-conscious and organized vanguard of the working class—millions strong—is necessary. And why that new state power provides working people the mightiest weapon possible to wage the ongoing battle to end Black oppression and every form of exploitation and human degradation inherited from millennia of class-divided society.”

“It’s a comfort to me. I like to read it. That’s what I tell everyone,” said Joyce Nelson from Brooklyn when asked by *Militant* distributors Susan LaMont and Ma’mud Shirvani why she wanted to renew her subscription to the paper.

Nelson is a Jamaican-born retired home care aide. She said she knew other friends and family members who would be interested in the paper, starting with her daughter Pauline. She then called the latter and handed the phone to LaMont. “Sure, I’ll subscribe,” said Pauline, adding she was familiar with the paper, seeing it in Harlem and reading it from time to time.

In addition to renewing her subscription, Nelson got a copy of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. (See box on the Five on page 7.)

Shirelynn George met *Militant* distributors Emma Johnson and Steve Clark Oct. 21 to go around the East Flatbush area of Brooklyn where she lives in order to publicize a meeting on the 1979-83 Grenada Revolution where both George and Clark are speaking and introduce people to the *Militant*. (See Militant Labor Forum calendar on page 6.)

George participated in the revolution

led by Maurice Bishop in the Caribbean island-nation of Grenada, which opened the door for workers and farmers to begin confronting the legacy of slavery, colonial oppression and imperialist domination. The revolution was overthrown and Bishop murdered in a 1983 coup by a Stalinist faction inside the revolutionary government, making it possible for Washington to invade the island.

By walking around the stores and talking to people George knew in the neighborhood, several leaflets advertising the Grenada meeting were posted and two subscriptions to the *Militant* and one copy of *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, a collection of speeches and interviews by the revolutionary leader, were sold.

“I find it important to make the information contained in the *Militant* available and also because it presents a viable alternative to capitalism and the way to get there,” Philippe Tessier said when asked why he joined with *Militant* distributor Bev Bernardo going door to door in Montreal last weekend.

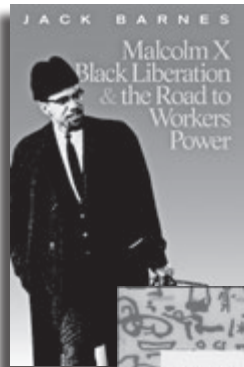
Tessier is a student at the University of Montreal. He subscribed to the *Militant* at the Montreal Book Fair last fall, along with several books published by Pathfinder Press. He regularly attends the Militant Labor Forum program in that city and has begun to sell the *Militant*, including a subscription, to fellow students and friends.

These are examples that all readers can emulate.

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Your reports, comments, quotes and photos are crucial for this column. Send them by 9 a.m. EDT every Monday.

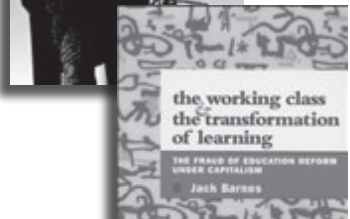
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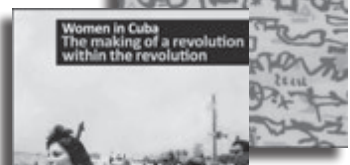
Why the “revolutionary conquest of state power by a politically class-conscious and organized vanguard of the working class—millions strong—is necessary.”

\$10 with subscription to the *Militant* (usually \$20)



The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning by Jack Barnes

\$2 with a subscription (usually \$3)



Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer

\$10 with a subscription (usually \$20)



The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free Articles, interviews from the *Militant*

\$3 with a subscription (usually \$5)

See distributors on page 10

Contribute to SWP Party-Building Fund

A chart will appear in the next issue of the *Militant*, announcing quotas from local areas for the fall 2012 Socialist Workers Party fund. The drive runs from Oct. 20 to Dec. 23, with a goal of raising \$95,000 to aid the work of the Socialist Workers Party over the coming year.

The SWP, a revolutionary working-class party, depends on contributions from workers, farmers and students to fund its work and make it possible to respond to class-struggle developments in the U.S. and around the world.

At the center of the party’s activity is participating with other readers of the *Militant* in the fall campaign to sell subscriptions to the paper along with books on revolutionary working-class politics published by Pathfinder Press.

The *Militant* will cover the progress of the fund drive toward reaching its goals and highlight the winning of new contributors. Party supporters in Miami have set the pace by taking an initial goal of winning 15 new contributors. Supporters of the fund should send in reports for the *Militant’s* coverage on the effort in your area by Monday 9 a.m. EDT.

Contributions can be sent to the SWP address nearest you (see page 10) or directly to the SWP National Office at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, NY, NY 10018.

—SUSAN LAMONT

Susan LaMont is director of the 2012 SWP Party-Building Fund

SWP vice president candidate: ‘Workers need our own party’

Texas youth join DeLuca to get out ‘Militant’

BY CINDY JAQUITH

EDINBURG, Texas—“It will be millions of men and women no one has heard of before—like the South African miners and the workers in Chinese iPhone factories, most of whom are your age—who will be in the forefront of the coming battles to replace the capitalist system with one run by working people,” Maura DeLuca, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, told students at an Oct. 18 meeting here at the University of Texas-Pan American.

Edinburg lies about 10 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border. Twenty-five students came to the talk, sponsored by the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance, a new group on campus. “Until we see ourselves as an international class of workers, having more in common with fellow workers in other countries than with our bosses and their government, the employers will continue to succeed in driving down our wages and working conditions,” DeLuca said.

“We’re in a period marked by persistently high unemployment, more competition among workers for lower paying jobs with less benefits and longer hours, and unions that have been weakened over the decades,” DeLuca said. “Yet there is an openness among workers to talk about a revolutionary working-class perspective. In some cases workers have started to fight back, and one of the biggest things they’re winning right now is a sense of unity and dignity.”

She recommended students join in the campaign to circulate the *Militant* door to door in working-class neighborhoods.

The student body at University of Texas-Pan American is overwhelmingly working-class and the big majority is Mexican or Chicano. The surrounding area is dominated by large farms growing corn, sugarcane, sorghum, green vegetables and citrus fruit, as well as food processing plants and other industry. The area has been hard hit by the capitalist economic crisis. The official unemployment rate in Hidalgo County, where Edinburg is located, was 11.7 percent in August, according to the Department of Labor.

Those attending the meeting included a Coca-Cola worker who goes to school part time, a Chick-fil-A worker, a former Marine who said he has been

rethinking U.S. foreign policy, and a National Guardsman just returned from deployment in Djibouti.

For more than an hour, DeLuca fielded questions from the audience. “How did you become a socialist?” was one. DeLuca said as a youth in Pittsburgh she became aware of police brutality and racism, which she opposed, and the issue of women’s right to choose abortion, which she supported. She later met Pittsburgh-area coal miners who were socialists and started attending Militant Labor Forums sponsored by distributors of the *Militant*. In 2006 she joined miners and others who belonged to the Socialist Workers Party in getting out the *Militant* in response to the deadly mine explosion in Sago, W.Va., that killed 12 miners. She soon joined the SWP.

Several students in the audience had grown up in or around Monterrey, Mexico, capital of the state of Nuevo León. Christian Velazquez, who told the *Militant* his father worked in construction and also as a bus driver, while his mother sewed clothes and waited tables, asked DeLuca how to organize political work in Monterrey, given the grip of drug cartels and bourgeois politicians who back them.

Gangs, drugs and capitalist system

“Gangs and drugs are all part of the capitalist system. They are just a section of the capitalist class that takes more



Militant/Cindy Jacquith

Maura DeLuca, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, addresses meeting at University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas, Oct. 18. “Until we see ourselves as part of an international class,” she said, “the bosses will continue to drive down our wages.”

risk, hoping for higher profit rates,” replied DeLuca.

“Gangs and drug runners played a major role in pre-revolutionary Cuba under the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship,” she said. “But the revolutionary struggle by Cuba’s workers and peasants, under the leadership of the July 26th Movement swept Batista and his gang of cronies—capitalist exploiters, legal and illegal—from power, and began to rebuild the country in their own interests.

“The question here in the U.S., in Mexico and around the world is working-class leadership,” DeLuca said. “Workers need our own party, like they did in Cuba.”

On Saturday morning members of the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance joined DeLuca and SWP campaign supporters from Houston going door to door with

the *Militant*. In little more than half an hour, they sold one subscription to the paper and three single copies.

Four members of the group then piled into cars to make the six-hour trip to Houston so they could participate in a reception for DeLuca the next day. The reception drew 25 people, including garment, rail and assembly workers. Roxanne Carrion, president of the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance, addressed the gathering along with DeLuca.

“We started the RSA in August because there were only Democrats and Republicans on campus,” Carrion explained. “We want to network with students and workers in the valley. We want to talk about what socialism means to us. We’re all subscribers to the *Militant* and we go door to door to get people to read the paper.”

‘Fight for big, gov’t-funded jobs program’

Continued from front page

of Europe the official unemployment rate is 25 percent, and there is no jobs program there either.

“The only program the rulers have is to take it out of the working class—to make unemployment worse, to press workers more, to make the jobs that are available pay less, go faster, more dangerous, in an effort to boost their sagging profit rates,” he added.

“Romney claims he will create 12 million jobs,” he continued. “He says he’ll do this by lowering taxes and reducing regulation on businesses, which he calls ‘job creators.’ But a capitalist business’s job is not to create jobs.

“If Romney had gone into a board meeting of Bain Capital and said ‘let’s talk about how we can create more jobs today,’ he’d be run out of there,” Harris said. “Their job is to make a profit. If hiring more workers will do that, they will hire. If they can’t profit by producing and selling commodities, they won’t take out loans from banks, they won’t hire more workers. Nothing the government does will change that.

“Our campaign says workers need to fight for a massive government-funded jobs program—one that isn’t dependent on the profits of individual capitalists—to put millions of people to work building roads, hospitals, day care centers and infrastructure everybody needs,” Harris said.

“There are enormous political issues that were simply not mentioned in the debates,” he continued. “The fight for women’s equality, the drive toward war, the attacks on the right to vote, the fight against racist discrim-

ination, the prison system—that’s a huge issue. The U.S. has the largest prison population in the world and 40 percent of them are Black, 20 percent Latino.

Harris spoke at a number of classes during the day, introduced by Ken Morgan, a professor of Urban Studies. Harris began each talk by explaining that when working people are told they can change society by voting they are being lied to.

“I’m 64 and I’ve never voted to go to war. I’ve never voted to lose my job,” he said. “You’re told to vote for a person you wish will do better, you hope will do better, then you’re disappointed every time.

“If the SWP wins any election, we would use the power of that office to support struggles of working people—any union struggle, any struggle by women to defend their right to abortion,” he explained.

Socialist Workers candidates across US

California

Gerardo Sánchez, US Senate
Carole Lesnick, Congress, 12th CD
Arlene Rubinstein, Congress, 33rd CD
Ellie García, Congress, 34th CD

Florida

Naomi Craine, US Senate
Tom Baumann, Congress, 17th CD
Anthony Dutrow, Congress, 20th CD
Dean Hazlewood, State Atty, District 11

Georgia

David Ferguson, Congress, 3rd CD
Rachele Fruit, Congress, 4th CD
John Benson, Congress, 5th CD

Illinois

John Hawkins, Congress, 1st CD
Laura Anderson, Congress, 3rd CD
Dennis Richter, Congress, 7th CD
Alyson Kennedy, Cook County Atty

Iowa

David Rosenfeld, Congress, 3rd CD
Maggie Trowe, State Senate, District 18
Helen Meyers, Iowa House, District 36

Massachusetts

Laura Garza, US Senate
Sarah Ullman, Congress, 7th CD

Minnesota

Frank Forrestal, US Senate
Tony Lane, Congress, 5th CD

Nebraska

Joe Swanson, US Senate
Callie Miaoulis, 29th District Neb. Legis.

New York

Róger Calero, US Senate
Seth Galinsky, Congress, 8th CD
Deborah Liatos, Congress, 13th CD
Nancy Boyasko, Congress, 15th CD

Pennsylvania

Osborne Hart, US Senate
Chris Hoeppner, Congress, 1st CD

Texas

Jacquie Henderson, US Senate
Steve Warshell, Congress, 18th CD
Cindy Jacquith, Congress, 19th CD
Mike Fitzsimmons, Congress, 29th CD

Washington

Mary Martin, Governor
John Naubert, US Senate

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Omari Musa, Delegate, US House of Rep.

Literature on SWP presidential campaign



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ON THE PICKET LINE

Walmart workers, supporters picket store north of Miami

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla.—About 40 Walmart workers and supporters picketed in front of the Walmart store here, just north of Miami, Oct. 11 as part of protests and walkouts at 28 stores in 12 states Oct. 9-11. In southern Florida, 12 workers from several stores joined the walkouts.

The actions were organized by OUR Walmart (Organization United for Respect at Walmart), an association of current and former employees backed by the United Food and Commercial Workers union. Walmart employs about 1.4 million people in 4,500 U.S. stores.

“They say they only have part-time work, unless you’re a friend of the manager,” Brittany Bond, who has worked at the store here for three years, told the rally.

“When I was pregnant, I still had to work three departments by myself,” said Rose Joseph, a Walmart worker in Fort Lauderdale. “They don’t want to give people full-time hours so they don’t have to pay benefits and sick days.”

“Many wouldn’t do it themselves,” Bond told the *Militant* Oct. 21, when asked about her coworkers’ reactions to the walkout. “But they were glad someone did.” She said managers didn’t try to retaliate for her participation.

In July, OUR Walmart activists spoke at a zoning board hearing considering a request by Walmart to build a store in midtown Miami. They pointed to the low wages and bad work conditions as an argument against granting the permits. Some merchants complained that Walmart will drive them out of business.

—Naomi Craine

Walmart workers press demands in Southern California

PICO RIVERA, Calif.—About 200 demonstrators at the Walmart store here Oct. 4 supported demands for higher wages and better working conditions at the retail giant. While most of the demonstrators were not Walmart workers, it included workers from seven area stores, as well as members and full-time staff of local unions.

Thirty-nine workers walked out for much of the day at the store here. They were joined by between three and seven workers from each store in La Quinta, Rosemead, Duarte, Paramount, Baldwin Park and Crenshaw.

The protest and walkouts were organized by OUR Walmart. Three Walmart workers interviewed by the *Militant* Oct. 15 spoke about the actions and work conditions at the stores.

“To lift anything heavy a team lift is required but you can’t ask for another person to help you,” said Dan Hindman, 28, who has worked at the Paramount store for more than two years. He noted that even full-time workers work as little as 34 hours in a week.

“A lot of associates don’t know their rights,” said Venzani Luna, 33. Luna, who has worked for six years at the Walmart store here, was given verbal and written warnings and a short suspension by bosses after joining the OUR Walmart campaign.

“Half of the first shift didn’t work,” said Evelin Cruz, 41, a worker at the Pico Rivera store for more than eight years. “People are tired of store managers pushing them around. Walmart’s biggest fear is people coming together.”

Cruz, Hindman and Luna joined with about 200 people from around the country at a protest at the company’s Bentonville, Ark., corporate headquarters Oct. 10. OUR Walmart is planning other protests on “Black Friday,” a major shopping day after Thanksgiving

—Ellie García

Supporters of women’s rights defend NY abortion clinic



Militant/Candace Wagner

JAMAICA, N.Y.—Forty-five defenders of women’s right to choose abortion turned out to escort patients into the Choices Women’s Medical Center here, Oct. 20. To counter the weekly harassment by an anti-abortion group a small number of escorts volunteer every Saturday. On this date two separate groups targeted the clinic.

“I’ve been harassed myself just going into a clinic for a cancer screening,” Melissa Quesinberry said, explaining to the *Militant* why she volunteers. “I come to help women get to the door and to stand in front so people don’t have to see the blown-up graphic images that they bring.”

—CANDACE WAGNER AND REBECCA WILLIAMSON

US Navy seeks to drop cleanup of Vieques bombing site

BY SETH GALINSKY

Nine years after it was forced by years of protests to stop using the Puerto Rican island of Vieques as a bombing range and munitions disposal site, the U.S. Navy is proposing to fence off some of the contaminated areas instead of cleaning them up.

For more than six decades the Navy used a one-square-mile area on the eastern edge of the 20-mile-long island as a bombing range. It also maintained other military facilities on the 25,000 acres it had confiscated, much of it from local farmers and fishermen, including about 400 acres on the western edge that it used to bury or blow up munitions.

On May 1, 2003, the day after the Navy officially ended its military exercises there, thousands poured into the streets of Vieques to celebrate. The successful fight to kick the Navy out was an example and inspiration for all

those who opposed the U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico.

The Navy sites were not returned to the people of Vieques, but turned over to the U.S. Department of Interior.

The U.S. Health Department admits that there is an abnormally high rate of cancer and other diseases on the island, but denies this has anything to do with the toxic substances, including depleted uranium, dumped by the Navy.

The U.S. Navy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are now recommending that no cleanup be performed on close to 300 acres of the site on the western edge of the island, and propose instead that the contaminated area—which includes unexploded munitions—be fenced off with barb wire and warning signs.

“They should complete the cleanup and turn over the land the way they found it,” said Ismael Guadalupe, a longtime leader of the fight against the

Navy occupation.

“Their plan implies that they are never going to finish the cleanup on the larger site” on the eastern edge of the island either, Guadalupe said, “including thousands of bombs on the sea floor.”

Even community members of the Navy’s Restoration Advisory Board have rejected the Navy’s recommendation. A final decision has not been made.

“We have no power, we are not a sovereign country,” Guadalupe said.

Removing all the munitions “would destroy beneficial habitat” for wildlife, claimed Navy spokesperson James Brantley in response to questions from the *Militant* Oct. 16, adding that it would cost an initial \$57 million.

When asked if the Navy planned to limit the cleanup on the bigger areas around the old bombing range in the same fashion, he said there would be “remedies in place by 2022.”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 6, 1987

SHERIDAN, Wyo.—In what is becoming a major showdown between the labor movement and big business, 84 striking coal miners were arrested and charged with “disorderly conduct” here on October 23. The miners were participating in a sit-down blockade that prevented two busloads of scabs from leaving Sheridan for the Decker Coal Co. mine.

Some 270 members of United Mine Workers of America Local 1972 have been on strike since the beginning of October at the large Decker strip mine.

The UMWA is demanding contract provisions protecting their membership’s jobs from being eliminated by subcontracting.

The company is seeking cuts in medical care coverage and a wage freeze. But union members point out that wages are not the real issue. They say the company wants to bust their union.



November 5, 1962

NEW YORK—Record-breaking demonstrations here protested Kennedy’s blockade of Cuba. On Oct. 27, 2,000 persons picketed in Hammarskjöld Plaza, near the United Nations, in defense of Cuba. Called by several organizations, including the Committee to Halt World War III and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the picket was the biggest ever held at the UN in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

The following day, some 10,000 persons demonstrated in the same place in opposition to the war threat.

Protests began in New York City immediately following Kennedy’s Oct. 22 speech announcing the blockade. Several groups originally called for a demonstration in Times Square. The New York police commissioner arbitrarily proclaimed a ban on all Times Square demonstrations “for the duration of the Cuban crisis.”



November 6, 1937

Twenty years ago this week there took place the greatest event in the history of mankind. Led by those magnificent, firm, and clear-sighted men forged by Lenin into the Bolshevik Party, the workers of Petrograd began the era of the socialist revolution. Mankind, after untold centuries of barbarism, violence, ignorance, brutality, oppression, was nearing its maturity. Men, grown conscious of their destiny, were launching the final conflict to lift themselves out of the darkness of pre-history into the freedom and expansion of a truly human society.

No courage ever before witnessed was comparable to the courage of these workers and their leaders.

With them was the future of mankind. With them was the cry for justice burning in the hearts of the oppressed and suffering. With them were the hopes and aspirations of the masses.



Somali convicted on frame-up ‘terror’ charges in Minneapolis

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS—In one of the most extensive U.S. government “counterterrorist” operations in recent years, Mahamud Said Omar faces possible life in prison for his Oct. 18 conviction on charges he facilitated the recruitment of Somali-American men here to fight for al-Shabab against U.S.-backed forces in Somalia.

Omar was convicted on five counts, two for providing material support to “terrorists” and three conspiracy-related charges. Four of the five counts carry a sentence of up to 15 years in prison, while the fifth count—“conspiracy to kill, kidnap, maim, and injure persons abroad”—carries a maximum of life in prison.

To date, 18 men have been hit with “terrorism”-related charges as part of the FBI’s massive “Operation Rhino,” which began in 2007 and has involved the National Security Division of the Justice Department, State Department and the Department of Defense. The ongoing probe is based on an alleged “pipeline” of some 20 al-Shabab recruits from Minneapolis to Somalia.

Prosecutors claim that Omar provided money—up to \$2,400—to al-Shabab. The armed Islamist group has been battling against the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government and against an invasion by the Ethiopian military. Al-Shabab was designated a foreign terrorist organization in February 2008 by the State Department, which says the group has ties to al-Qaeda.

Somalia has been embroiled in a civil war and without any functioning central government for more than two decades. Both the current transitional government leadership and al-Shabab were previously associated with the Islamic Courts Council, a union of sharia courts that arose following the collapse of the Somali government in 1991. It controlled much of the southern part of the country until late 2006.

According to prosecutors, Omar, 46, who worked as a part-time janitor at the largest mosque here, encouraged and facilitated the recruitment of al-Shabab soldiers from this city, which is home to the largest Somali population in the U.S.

The three-week trial has been marked by extensive testimony of government informers, FBI agents and secret warrants obtained under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Of the 18 men charged so far, seven have entered guilty pleas. Three have agreed to cooperate with the government, including testifying against Omar, as part of plea bargains. During the trial they said the main motivation for returning to Somalia was to oppose the Ethiopian invasion of their country.

Abdifatah Yusuf Isse, one of the government informants, pleaded guilty to a single count of providing material support to terrorists. In exchange for his testimony, the government dropped a charge of conspiracy to kill, kidnap, maim and injure, reported the *Pioneer Press*. Instead of a possible life sentence, he now faces up to 15 years. Salah Osman Ahmed cut a plea bargain deal that reduced his possible sentence from life plus 68 years to 15 years.

Kamal Said Hassan had his potential prison time reduced from life to 38 years. “Hassan became an undercover

informant and cut a deal with federal prosecutors,” reported the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. “The bargain also got him and his family members a flight home from Yemen at government expense. The FBI put him and his wife up in a four-bedroom suburban home while he worked undercover for about six months. And federal agents took him to dinner, the movies, the YMCA and bowling, and provided him with a computer and Xbox video games.”

The government wiretapped calls after being issued secret warrants from secret judges. Prosecutors presented six calls at the trial; the total number of tapped calls is undisclosed. In an earlier frame-up case of two Somali women—Amina Farah Ali and Hawo Mohamed Hassan—over a period of 10 months the FBI wiretapped some 30,000 calls, and carried out searches of the women’s computers, homes and trash.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder visited Minneapolis in May 2011 “to reaffirm his office’s commitment to rooting out those responsible for the recruiting of young Somali-Americans to return to Africa to fight for the terrorist group Al-Shabab,” the *Star Tribune* said. The same article reported the FBI investigation “stretched from Minnesota to Canada, Europe and Australia.”

Before the trial started in September, the FBI stepped up its investigations of the Somali community, including house visits, and handing out subpoenas to appear before a grand jury. The Council on

Asia-Pacific Cuba solidarity conference held in Sri Lanka



Militant/Baskaran Appu

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka—Some 226 delegates from 18 countries met here Oct. 20-21 for the Sixth Asia-Pacific Regional Conference for Solidarity with Cuba. Representing a range of Cuba solidarity committees and other organizations, participants came from Laos, East Timor, Cambodia, Vietnam, India, Nepal, China, Bangladesh, North Korea, Philippines, South Korea, New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, Burma, Mongolia and Japan, as well as from Cuba and the United States.

They exchanged experiences and discussed how to advance the worldwide fight to win the release of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government, as well as to oppose Washington’s decades-long economic war against the Cuban Revolution. The gathering, hosted by the Sri Lanka-Cuba Solidarity National Committee, was organized at the initiative of the Havana-based Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

The photo shows the presiding committee. From left: Pallab Sen Gupta of India; Du Duc Dinh of Vietnam; Chamal Rajapaksa, speaker of Sri Lanka parliament; Caridad Diego of Cuba; and Chaleune Ylapoher, minister of justice in Laos. At podium is Dinesh Gunawardena, chair of conference preparatory committee and Sri Lankan minister of water supply drainage.

—RON POULSEN AND JANET ROTH

American-Islamic Relations Minnesota reported a “dramatic uptick” in calls from concerned Somalis about FBI harassment.

“There are still ongoing investigations,” said B. Todd Jones, U.S. Attorney for Minnesota. “This isn’t the end.”

Omar’s attorneys say they will appeal.

London march against joblessness, gov’t ‘austerity’

Continued from front page

their anger at the attacks of the bosses and the Conservative government and push for measures to alleviate the blows to jobs, hours and safety.

“Why should I pay for this recession?” asked Bill Smith, a postal worker from the northwest marching with the Communication Workers Union contingent. He told the *Militant* how Royal Mail is taking advantage of the high level of unemployment. “There is more bullying and harassment at work and there are not other jobs to go to. It’s like living in Stalin’s Russia,” he said. “They used to take part-time workers onto full-time contracts but they don’t do that anymore.”

In addition to the march in London, tens of thousands rallied in similar protests in Belfast, Ireland; and Glasgow, Scotland.

Joining a number of union officials, one of the featured speakers at the rally was Ed Miliband, leader of the opposition Labour Party.

Miliband got a good response when he attacked the government’s drive to cut public services and jobs. But he met boos when he said he had to “level with people” and under his party there would have to be cutbacks.

“Of course there will still be hard choices,” Miliband told the crowd. “I have said whoever was in government now there would still need to be some cuts. But this government has shown us cutting too far and too fast, self-defeating austerity is not the answer.”

“We would make different but fairer choices including on pay and jobs,” he said.

The United Kingdom is mired in economic contraction and the working class has been hit hard. Unemployment has stood at more than 2 million since the beginning of 2009. In August, official unemployment was 2.53 million. Half of all new jobs created recently provide less than 30 hours work a week. Long-term unemployment, those out of work for more than a year, increased in June to 887,000.

Living standards have fallen over the last four years by 13 percent. The impact of continuing high unemployment and ongoing attacks by the bosses drew comments from workers on the march who spoke with the *Militant*.

Jane Rogers, a retired shop worker from Blackpool, marched with the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers. She described how the “government is extending Sunday trading laws and retailers use this to cut shop workers’ wages by slashing overtime rates. The government should be creating jobs, not cutting them.”

Earlier this year the government pledged to cut 730,000 public sector jobs by 2016.

“I’m angry about the cuts to nursing staff, the NHS [National Health Service] is kowtowing to the businesses,” Caroline Hawkins, a nurse from the Midlands and member of UNISON, the main public workers union, said. “They are trying to reduce our sick pay, as well as the allowance I get for driving thousands of miles to visit patients every month.”

Thomas Galliford, a history student at University of Hertfordshire, came with his family to the protest. “I’m marching

because my friends can’t get jobs, my girlfriend’s tuition fees have risen and my parents are having to work longer hours,” he said.

Unemployment for 16 to 24 year olds stands at 20.5 percent, nearly three times the rate for the population as a whole.

Fred Gibson, a bus driver for the Arriva company in High Wickham and a member of UNITE, said he was “demonstrating for justice because working people are not being treated like the upper classes. I often work 12-hour shifts, but get paid for 10, with a two hour unpaid break. Arriva is now contracting out the work of cleaners and the new cleaning bosses will be looking to take advantage of that to weaken the union.”

“The job cuts haven’t started to bite yet, but they will. There are few jobs already in the former mining villages in the northeast,” said Alan Johnson, a retired miner from Dawdon colliery, Durham, a member of the National Union of Mineworkers and veteran of the 1972, ’74 and ’85 miners’ strikes.

“Right now they’re crucifying people on incapacity benefits,” Johnson said, describing those on disability. “Whether they’re in the union or not we’re fighting for all retired miners. Over 50 percent of appeals by workers against rulings to eliminate their incapacity benefit are won.”

Some workers passing by the march expressed support for the government’s attacks. “Labour got us into this mess and the Conservatives will look after us more because they will spend less,” Marion Harris, a retired nurse from Cwmbran in South Wales, said.

Fidel Castro responds to media lies about his health

In a letter printed in Cuba's daily newspaper Granma Oct. 22 under the headline "Fidel Castro is Dying," the revolutionary leader made fun of the rumors of his impending death. Even after Cuban media published a letter from Castro to medical students Oct. 19, the rumors spread in the capitalist press around the world.

The translation below is from the English-language edition of Granma. Footnotes are by the Militant.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

A message to the first graduating class from the Victoria de Girón Medical Sciences Institute was enough to prompt imperialist propaganda to go into overdrive and news agencies to voraciously launch themselves after the lie. Not only that, but in their cables they attributed the most unheard of nonsense to the patient.

The ABC newspaper in Spain reported that a Venezuelan doctor from an unknown location revealed that Castro had suffered a massive embolism in the

right cerebral artery; "I can state that we are not going to see him again in public." The alleged doctor who, if he is, would first abandon his own compatriots, described Castro's health as "very close to a neural-vegetative state."

While many persons in the world are deceived by information agencies which publish this nonsense—almost all in the hands of the privileged and rich—people believe less and less in them. Nobody likes to be deceived; even the most incorrigible liar expects to be told the truth. In April of 1961, everyone believed the information published in the news agencies that the mercenary invaders of Girón or Bay of Pigs,¹ whatever one wants to call it, were approaching Havana, when in fact some of them were fruitlessly trying by boat to reach the yanki warships escorting them.

The peoples are learning and resistance is growing, faced with the crisis of capitalism which is recurring with greater frequency; no lies, repression or new weapons will be able to prevent the collapse of a production system which is increasingly unequal and unjust.

A few days ago, very close to the 50th anniversary of the October Crisis,² news agencies pointed to three guilty parties: Kennedy, having recently become the leader of the empire, Khrushchev and Castro. Cuba did not have anything to do with nuclear weapons, nor with the unnecessary slaughter of Hiroshima and Nagasaki perpetrated by the president of the United States, Harry S. Truman, thus establishing the tyranny of nuclear weapons. Cuba was defending its right to independence and social justice.

When we accepted Soviet aid in weapons, oil, foodstuffs and other resources, it was to defend ourselves from yanki plans to invade our homeland, subjected to a dirty and bloody war which that capitalist country imposed on us from the very first months, which left thousands of Cubans dead and maimed.

When Khrushchev proposed the installation here of medium range missiles similar to those the United States had in Turkey—far closer to the USSR than Cuba to the United States—as a solidarity necessity, Cuba did not hesitate to agree to such a risk. Our conduct was ethically irreproachable. We will never apologize to anyone for what we did. The fact is that half a century has gone by, and here we still are with our heads held high.

1. On April 17, 1961, 1,500 U.S.-based Cuban mercenaries organized, financed and deployed by Washington invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the island's southern coast. In less than 72 hours, they were defeated by Cuba's revolutionary militias, armed forces and police. On April 19 remaining invaders were captured at Playa Girón, (Girón Beach), the name used in Cuba for the invasion and battle.
2. In October 1962 U.S. President John Kennedy demanded removal of Soviet nuclear missiles installed in Cuba at the request of the government of the Soviet Union. Kennedy ordered a naval blockade, stepped up preparations to invade the island and placed U.S. armed forces on nuclear alert. In response, Cuban workers and farmers mobilized in the millions to defend their revolution. On Oct. 28 that year, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, without consulting the Cuban government, announced his decision to remove the missiles.

March in Nepal demands 'Free the Cuban 5!'



Courtesy of Surendra Raj Gosai

More than 200 people participated Oct. 19 in a march and rally in Katmandu, Nepal, demanding the U.S. government free the Cuban Five and end its embargo on Cuba.

The march went to the U.S. Embassy, where a protest message was delivered, addressed to President Barack Obama. The action was sponsored by the Nepal Revolutionary Youth Union.

—EMMA JOHNSON

I like to write and I am writing; I like to study and I am studying. There are many tasks in the area of knowledge. For example, never before have the sciences advanced at such an astounding speed.

I stopped publishing "Reflections" because it is definitely not my role to take up pages in our press, dedicated to

other tasks which the country requires.

Birds of ill omen! I don't even remember what a headache is. As evidence of what liars they are, I present them with the photos which accompany this article.

Fidel Castro Ruz
October 21, 2012, 10:12 a.m.



Fidel Castro reads Granma dated Oct. 19, when capitalist media was running reports that he had suffered a massive stroke and was "moribund." Photo was printed with above letter.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston
It's What Workers and Farmers Do, Not Elections, That Matters. Speaker: James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president. Sat., Oct. 27. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program 7:30 p.m. Donation: dinner, \$7; program, \$5. 13 Bennington St., 2nd floor. Tel.: (617) 569-9169.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis
The 2012 Elections: The Working-Class View. Speaker: Tony Lane, SWP candidate for Congress, 5th C.D. Sat., Nov. 3. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

NEW YORK

Manhattan
Maurice Bishop and the Grenada Revolution (1979-83): Living Lessons for Working People in the U.S., the Caribbean and the World. Speakers: Shirelynn George, participant in Grenada Revolution; Steve Clark, Socialist Workers Party, author of "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop." Fri., Oct. 26, 7:30 p.m. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor. Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Manhattan
Diasporic Consciousness, Black Identity, and the Present Memory of Cuban Racism: A Symposium on the Centennial of the 1912 Uprising and Massacre of the Independent Party of Color. Chair: Dr. Geoffroy de Laforcade, Norfolk State University. Speakers: Dr. Tomás Fernández Robaina, Cuban National Archives; Roberto Zurbano, Cuban author, Casa de las Américas; Gloria Rolando, Cuban filmmaker, Cuban National Film Institute. Featuring the documentary film "1912: Breaking the Silence" by Gloria Rolando. Sat., Nov. 3. 12:30-5:00 p.m. Donation: \$10. The Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center, 3940 Broadway. Tel.: (212) 568-1341.

Who are the Cuban Five

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups operating in southern Florida. These paramilitary outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with "conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information."

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shoot-down of two aircraft flown by the counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana's repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years.

All but René González remain in prison. Since October 2011 he has been serving a three-year "supervised release." On the pretext of his dual citizenship, his request to return to Cuba has been denied. His wife, Olga Salanueva, is barred from entering the United States, as is Adriana Pérez, the wife of Hernández.

‘I was expelled by Batista and embraced by Fidel’

2006 interview with Rafael Cancel Miranda

The following interview with Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda appeared in the July 21, 2006, issue of the Cuban daily *Granma*.

Cancel Miranda is one of five Puerto Rican Nationalist Party members who spent a quarter century in U.S. prisons following armed protests they carried out in Washington against colonial rule, including one in 1954 inside the Capitol building. Released in 1979 through an international defense campaign, he has remained a prominent leader of the independence movement.

In the Oct. 22 issue, the *Militant* published a transcript of a talk Cancel Miranda gave Sept. 14 in Washington, D.C., at a meeting that called on the U.S. government to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González—five Cuban revolutionaries who were framed up and convicted by the U.S. government on various conspiracy charges in 1998.

In the interview below Cancel Miranda recounts his days in pre-revolutionary Cuba, which he mentioned in his Sept. 14 talk. The interview was initially printed in the Aug. 14, 2006, issue of the *Militant*.

About the time the *Granma* interview was published, Cancel Miranda was awarded the José Martí Order, the highest honor issued by the Cuban government to non-Cuban leaders, at a ceremony in Havana.

The translation and bracketed material are by the *Militant*.



BY ORLANDO ORAMAS LEÓN

I went for a story and came back with two, which is not surprising since the subject of my interview is Rafael Cancel Miranda, the Puerto Rican patriot and emblem of the independence struggle.

We agreed to talk about his Cuban anecdotes, because he lived in Cuba and he was caught here by the 1952 coup [by U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista].

“I was in high school in Puerto Rico when I refused the U.S. draft. I was sentenced to two years and one day and sent to a prison in Tallahassee, Florida, where I remained from 1949 to 1951. I couldn’t get a reduced sentence because

I threw some punches at an abusive cop. I got out when I was 20. When I arrived in Puerto Rico the Yankees wanted to jail me again for the same thing. My family and friends decided I should come to Cuba.”

Young Cancel Miranda landed in Santiago de Cuba using a different identity, Rafael Rodríguez, the second last name of his father, a fearless Nationalist leader. It was in the days of misrule by Carlos Prío Socarrás, which the Puerto Rican experienced firsthand.

“I arrived in Havana by bus. Through the son of [Puerto Rican independence leader Pedro] Albizu Campos, I was provided housing at the Civil Damages Office, which was on Obispo Street. It was headed by Aracelio Azcuy, a politician of those days. Those were the days of *botellas* [no-show patronage jobs] and *garroteros* [loansharks]. A fake job appeared under the name of Lázaro Babot, who never came to collect. I told Azcuy, ‘Give it to me—I’ll do the job.’ That’s how I started at the Public Works, using a pick and shovel on the streets.”

By then they called him Lázaro from Santiago, because of his accent, which sounded so much like that of eastern Cubans, and which he attributes to the constant exchange between the eastern part of the Largest of the Antilles and his island, of which [Cuban leaders] “José Ramón Balaguer and Pedro Ross are descendants.”

“There was a lot of poverty in Cuba. Saturnino, a Black man who worked with me, would tell me, ‘I see that all you eat is bread and bananas.’ Things are rough, I told him, and when he learned that I was staying at the Civil Damages Office, he told me to go to his house and that there he would ‘fix up a little room.’ I went there, and it was conditions of extreme hardship. I told him, thank you, brother, for sharing your poverty with me. From that moment on, his mom would send me, in the lunch bucket she prepared for Saturnino, a *pisito* with fried plantains and other things. It was a gesture I will never forget.”

Another no-show job, this one without a name, took him to work on the construction of the Línea Street Tunnel, which connects the two banks of the Almendares River. There, confronting



Granma/Jorge Luis González

Rafael Cancel Miranda, left, Puerto Rican independence fighter, is awarded Cuba’s José Martí Order by Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuban National Assembly, in Havana, July 7, 2006. “Cuba will always stand with Puerto Rican fighters who continue to struggle,” Alarcón said.

“the exploiting and arrogant *gringo*,” he reciprocated the solidarity shown him by the Cubans.

“Raymond Concrete Pipe Co. was in charge of building the tunnel. I began wielding a pick and shovel, then working as a pipe builder, and later as head of a crew of 12 or 15 men. I was there about eight months and made some good friends. I remember the loansharks would take deductions out of the workers’ wages. There were several fatal accidents, but those lives meant little to the owners of the company. Then the gringo supervisor, a big guy named Smith, started insulting the Cubans in English, which they didn’t understand. I’d already been in prison in Florida and knew the language pretty well. I dished back at the American all his swearwords, and a few more I knew from prison. That was the end of that job.”

Around the same time the events of March 10, 1952, took place. “We went to sleep with Prío and woke up with Batista,” Cancel recalls people saying at the time. The Puerto Rican even wanted to respond to the coup with arms, but. . .

“Azcuy, that loudmouth politician of the Civil Damages Office, used to ask me to campaign for him, to write his speeches, but I would tell him no, because Puerto Rico had many friends in Cuba and I didn’t want to get mixed up in that horse trading. When the Batista coup happened, I slipped into his office, because Azcuy had a lot of light weapons, and I told him, ‘OK, now.’ But I had the bad luck of volunteering to the wrong person, because he chickened out. If I had hooked up with Fidel, the story would have been different and I might even have been involved in the attack on the Moncada [barracks on July 26, 1953].”

Expelled by Batista

“In 1950 there was a Nationalist insurrection in Puerto Rico, in which my father, who was later captured, took part. Since then the FBI had been looking for me. In 1951 I published an article in a Havana paper to commemorate the first anniversary of that uprising. The Yankee embassy learned about it and demanded the Prío Socarrás government turn me over along with another Puerto Rican, Reynaldo Trilla, but the authorities ignored them. Our position was that we didn’t have to go to the embassy because it wasn’t ours. After the coup, Batista’s police arrested us. They

locked me up in Tiscornia, where foreigners were jailed. Trilla and I were expelled in August 1952. Just think, what an honor: expelled by Batista and then embraced by Fidel.”

How did he learn of the January 1959 revolutionary victory?

“After the attack in the Capitol building in 1954, carried out with Lolita Lebrón, Andrés Figueroa, and Irvin Flores, they sent me to Alcatraz prison. Not even California newspapers got into that prison, but the magazine *Carteles* did circulate there, I don’t remember why. In one of its issues I received the first information that something had happened in Cuba, but I didn’t pay much attention to it. It had always been a game of ‘You get out so I can get in,’ and the last thing involved were the people. So I didn’t really know what was happening.”

By 1960 Cancel Miranda had been transferred to Leavenworth penitentiary in Kansas, leaving behind Alcatraz, which he had entered at the age of 24 and left at 30. In his new lockup, a photo from a local newspaper reminded him of one of his Cuban experiences, which allowed him to recognize that a genuine revolution was taking place in that country.

“When I was in Cuba, I had met a young woman who sold pastries at a little store on El Prado. I worked on the tunnel, and as I waited for the bus I always chatted with that attractive young Cuban woman. I would tell her, ‘You are like a flower in a swamp,’ because there was a huge amount of prostitution in that area, and she was very decent. In the Leavenworth prison, on a page of a Kansas newspaper, I saw in a picture a group of militia members with guns surrounding the U.S. embassy in Havana. And one of those militia members was that young woman, with her rifle. And I told myself, ‘If she is there, it must be good. And if the Marines, who used to consider all Cuban women prostitutes, go after them, I’m sure they’ll take ’em out, guns blazing.’”

Rafael Cancel Miranda, recently awarded the José Martí Order, has many memories of Cuba. Among his favorite is the following:

“When I returned, after getting out of prison, a young Cuban Pioneer put her neck scarf on me. Years later I met her again. That girl was Adriana [Pérez], the wife of Gerardo [Hernández], one of the Cuban Five jailed in the United States.”



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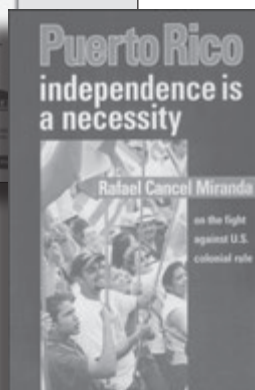
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Farmers in Indonesia rally for rights to land, against seizures

BY PATRICK BROWN
AND LINDA HARRIS

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Thousands of farmers, workers, fishers and students marched to the presidential palace here Sept. 24, National Farmers Day. Carrying flags identifying organizations in different parts of West Java, they demanded the return of land titles taken by the government, the military and capitalist corporations.

National Farmers Day marks the anniversary of passage in 1960 of the Basic Agrarian Law by President Sukarno, the first president of independent Indonesia. In recent years, it has been the occasion for farmers' protests. This year demonstrations were also held in Medan and Bandar Lampung in north and south Sumatra, and in Makassar on South Sulawesi, reported the *Jakarta Post*.

"SBY Yudhoyono is the farmers' biggest foe," chanted marchers as they approached the palace in Jakarta. The Democratic Party (SBY) of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has headed a coalition government since 2004. Farmers oppose a law passed in December that will speed up the process by which the government can take land from farmers and other landowners for projects such as roads, airports, power generation and oil facilities.

Taking part under the yellow flag of the Farmers Union of Indonesia (SPI) was Sarnan Marbok, 70, from Banten province, West Java. He said the title to his family land had been seized when an air force base was constructed in 1951. He farms and sells his rice to the local mill, but without legal ownership he cannot be sure of passing it on to the next generation, or claim compensation if the air force evicts him. Sarnan said that air force recruits sometimes fall into crops during sky-diving practice. "That's why we are very angry," he said.

As the march approached Merdeka (Freedom) Square in the center of the city, SPI flags mixed with those of farmers unions in Pasundan and Indramayu in West Java. Students from Universitas Islam and two other agricultural universities carried a banner that read, "Solve the Land Problem!"

"Ever since Dutch times, we have faced injustices," said one speaker, addressing the crowd from the roof of a truck leading the action. In the 1830s the Dutch colonial government began establishing plantations on Java and other islands to produce cocoa and other commercial products. Traditional farming communities were forced to provide either labor or land. Huge profits were made from sales in Europe, but food production on Java and Sumatra slumped and famines swept the islands.

Amid rising protests in Indonesia and the Netherlands, the Dutch capitalists were forced to mask the worst brutalities of the system, but it remained a hated centerpiece of their rule.

Gov't takes over land titles

The 1960s Basic Agrarian Law gave title to most land to the government—up to 70 percent of land is now in government hands, according to a World Bank report—but stipulated that customary communal use would be protected.

For many farming communities

maintaining their land is a constant struggle. In a March appeal, the Asia Human Rights Commission described an occupation by people from six villagers to delimit land used by two palm oil companies. The police opened fire on the occupiers, killing one and wounding eight, the commission reported.

The Feb. 10 issue of *Time* reported that "the National Land Agency recorded 2,791 disputes" in 2011, the same year that "a whopping \$19.28 billion of foreign direct investment poured into the country."

"The burden of the crisis is borne by the farmers. Land-grabbing has become worse," Anwar Marut of the National Union Confederation (KSN) told the *Militant*. The KSN helped build the Farmers Day protest.

Among those who brought solidarity to the farmers' action were strikers from Panarub Dwikarya Ltd., a football boot manufacturer in Tangerang, an industrial city close to Jakarta. Two thousand



Militant/Linda Harris

Farmers, joined by workers and students, march to presidential palace in Jakarta, Indonesia, Sept. 24 on National Farmers Day to demand return of land titles taken by government.

had gone on strike in July to protest the cranked-up speed of the production line. Union organizer Emilia told *Militant* reporters that 1,300 of them had stood firm in face of a company ultimatum to return to work or lose their jobs.

The protest also drew working people from fishing communities. "We are here to stand together with farmers against

discrimination," Habibha, a woman from Marunda, near the main Jakarta port of Tanjung Priok, told the *Militant*. Government authorities are "reclaiming areas of the sea to allow for the construction of new factories," she said. "They are building a sea wall that will make access to the sea and our livelihoods difficult."

'Maoism vs. Bolshevism': Lessons from Indonesia

Maoism vs. Bolshevism by Joseph Hansen, 90 pages. Pathfinder Press, 1998. Education for Socialists bulletin, Documents of the Socialist Workers Party. \$12.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Maoism vs. Bolshevism deals with the social and political roots and the international repercussions of the "most devastating defeat for the working class

IN REVIEW

since the fascist victory in Germany in 1933"—the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of members and supporters of the Communist Party and other working people in Indonesia in 1965. The Indonesian Communist Party, the biggest in the capitalist world, along with unions and other organizations were wiped out in just a few months.

The massacre was directed by Gen. Suharto, who subsequently led a coup that brought him to power. The reactionary U.S.-backed Suharto tyranny endured for some three decades.

Maoism vs. Bolshevism is a collection of Socialist Workers Party documents between 1966 and 1974 by Joseph Hansen, then a leader of the party.

Hansen poses the question: How could a political force like the Indonesian Communist Party, claiming 3 million members, another 3 million in the youth group and 20 million in mass organizations, undergo a mauling at the hands of armed forces totaling 350,000?

Workers and farmers in Indonesia were inspired by the 1949 Chinese Revolution. The Chinese Communist Party—which came to power on the crest of that mighty social upheaval carried through by millions of Chinese toilers—had enormous prestige and was looked to for leadership and guidance. The defeat in Indonesia cannot be understood, Hansen says, without understanding the role played by the CCP led by Mao Zedong. He compares it to the role the Soviet Communist Party

under Joseph Stalin played in Germany in the 1920s and '30s and in the Spanish Revolution in the 30s.

"In relation to Indonesia, Mao played a role comparable to that of Stalin in the German events," wrote Hansen. "Just as Stalin ... blocked the German Communist Party from developing a revolutionary policy that could have stopped Hitler and put the German working class in power, so Mao out of similar passing diplomatic needs (an alliance with Sukarno and the Indonesian bourgeoisie) blocked the Indonesian Communist party from developing a revolutionary policy that could have stopped the reactionary generals and put the Indonesian working class in power."

Sukarno became Indonesia's first president after a powerful national movement forced the Dutch colonialists to cede independence in 1949. He ceded power to Suharto in 1967.

The leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party, with Chairman D.N. Aidit at the helm, put the brakes on the mass movement and subordinated it to the Indonesian bourgeoisie, at the urging of Beijing.

Hansen points to the international repercussions of the defeat in Indonesia. "The most spectacular immediate result ... is to be seen in China. The evidence strongly indicates that it was the precipitating cause for the 'cultural revolution,'" a brutal and culturally repressive campaign launched by the Chinese Communist Party in August 1966.

Maoism vs. Bolshevism documents the discussion in the Fourth International, at the time an international organization of revolutionary parties, going into its 1969 and 1974 World Congresses on the assessment of the Cultural Revolution. The main dividing line is the characterization of the Maoist leadership.

Hansen and others saw the Maoist policy as expressing the interests of a "crystallized bureaucratic caste" that could not be reformed, but had to be overthrown. They characterized

this privileged social layer in China as "Stalinist, because of its essential similarity to the counterrevolutionary bureaucracy consolidated in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s."

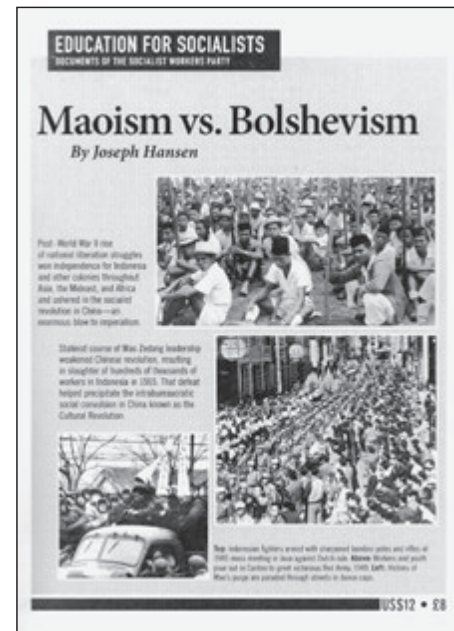
It's this commonality, in fact, that drove at that time the deep rivalry between the Soviet and Chinese governments, the booklet explains.

"Mao's policy on the international plane was fundamentally opportunist, aimed at reaching an accommodation with American imperialism and at practicing class collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the colonial and semi-colonial countries," Hansen explained. This "generalized policy of peaceful coexistence is dictated by the material interests of the bureaucratic caste, which fears the spread of revolution and the effect it might have on the masses in its own country."

The opposing position held by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Livio Maitan, leaders of sections of the Fourth International in Europe, saw the Maoist leadership as "bureaucratic centrist," sensitive to mass pressure for reforms

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Tortured into ‘confession’

Continued from front page

case Oct. 16. “Along with prison officials they have continued to torture him for the last 22 years.”

Appearing with Shackelford were Mark Clements and Wallace Gator Bradley, both well-known activists in the fight against police torturers and for release of those convicted based on coerced confessions.

Shackelford described how in October 1990 Chicago detectives, working under former Police Lieutenant Jon Burge, brutally interrogated Reed, who had been arrested on suspicion of murder.

Even though Reed had a metal rod in his leg and surgical pins in his knee as a result of a gunshot wound several years earlier, they handcuffed him “to a wall sitting in a chair and when he wouldn’t answer the way they wanted him to they kicked the chair out from under him,” Shackelford said. “They proceeded to beat him and kick him on his injured leg and in his back until the pain was so intense he would have said whatever they wanted.

“Since that incident 22 years ago police and prison officials have denied him surgery to correct the damage they did,” she said.

Burge is currently serving a four-and-a-half-year sentence for lying about torture in the Chicago Police department, but the detectives whom Reed accuses of torturing him—Victor Breska and Michael Kill—have never been charged.

Now after 22 years behind bars for a crime he says he did not commit, Reed

could be freed.

On June 18 the Illinois Torture and Relief Commission—a government body established in 2009 in response to the scandal around the Burge revelations—ruled in Reed’s case that “there is sufficient evidence of torture to conclude the Claim is credible and merits judicial review for appropriate relief.”

Reed’s case is the first of five the commission investigated before it closed in late June for lack of government funding. It is also the first to be reviewed in the Cook County court system.

Shackelford sat along with her supporters behind smoke-colored bullet-proof glass surrounding the courtroom of Associate Judge Thomas Gainer Jr., waiting for the case to be heard. The proceedings in the courtroom itself were barely audible.

Reed was not present at the hearing. His attorney, Andrea Lyon, appeared on his behalf and got agreement from the judge to set a new court date for Nov. 13 and to instruct officials at the Stateville Correctional Center where Reed is incarcerated to bring him to the hearing.

“The conclusions of the torture commission clearly show that Gerald Reed’s



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Armanda Shackelford, front, mother of Gerald Reed, who cops tortured and imprisoned in Chicago 22 years ago, speaks at news conference Oct. 16 outside Cook County Criminal Court Building. With her from left to right: John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress; Wallace Gator Bradley, activist against police brutality; and Mark Clements, who spent 27 years in prison after “confessing” under cop torture to a crime he didn’t commit.

claim of torture—which he first made in 1992 when he tried to get his confession thrown out—is credible,” Lyon told the *Militant* after the hearing. “In fact the report clearly shows that not only was he coerced to confess, but other witnesses were coerced into giving false testimony against him.

“Without the confession and the false statements, the state has no evidence,”

she said. “The court should free Gerald Reed now or at the very least order a new trial.”

The day before Reed’s case was heard the torture commission received a \$160,000 federal grant to continue its operations. When it suspended investigations the commission still had 30 cases under review and another 80 waiting to be reviewed.

‘Maoism vs. Bolshevism’: lessons from Indonesia

Continued from page 9

and that significant concessions to the masses would be a forthcoming result of the Cultural Revolution.

In an assessment of the Cultural Revolution presented to the 1974 World Congress, Hansen points to the effects of the Maoist foreign policy in relation to Vietnam during the U.S. war to roll back the revolution in that country. “The bankruptcy of this [Mao’s] foreign policy became glaringly clear when ... Mao offered ‘peaceful coexistence’ to the [U.S. Richard] Nixon administration.

“The real stake for Nixon was Vietnam. Mao paid off by inviting Nixon to Peking in February 1972. So that the Vietnamese should be certain not to miss the point, Nixon timed his visit to Peking to coincide with a savage escalation of the bombing of Indochina.”

The documents point to a number of other examples in which narrow nationalists interests of the Chinese bureaucracy clash irreconcilably with the interests of the working class on the international plane and reveal its counterrevolutionary character. Beijing was the first to recognize the reactionary Boumedienne regime that came to power with the overthrow of the Algerian Revolution in 1965, and among the first to recognize the bloody fascist-like dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile. It backed, and in some cases aided, capitalist military dictatorships around the world—from Gen. Francisco Franco’s Spain, to Greece, Ceylon, Sudan, East Bengal and Peru. It opposed reductions in NATO forces aimed against the Soviet Union and gave only lip service to selected workers’ struggles that didn’t impinge on these alliances.

The introduction to *Maoism vs.*

Bolshevism was written by Steve Clark on behalf of the Political Committee of the SWP in 1998, just weeks after Suharto’s resignation.

“Responsibility for the defeat [in Indonesia] lay not with bad ideas, but with a self-serving class-collaborationist course of the privileged bureaucratic caste in Peking and its subservient followers in the leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party,” writes Clark. “Only by clearly understanding the accountability of Stalinism for the 1965 catastrophe in Indonesia can we accurately appreciate the historic significance of the fact ... that the Indonesian workers, peasants, and youth who are today beginning to return to political life no longer confront this massive counterrevolutionary obstacle that repeatedly stood in their path to victory throughout much of this century.”

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The U.S. rulers are preparing to substantially reduce their troop numbers in Afghanistan. At the same time, Obama says U.S. troops will remain in the area through 2024, and his administration is negotiating with the regime in Kabul about how many will stay.

It’s worth recalling that the economic and social devastation that gave rise to the Taliban is a direct product of U.S. imperialist policies there. It’s Washington that backed the mujahedeen, comprised of the most reactionary and murderous Islamist forces, in the 1980s to drown in blood both the Soviet-backed government and any aspirations of toilers there for social progress. And it is the two most powerful counterrevolutionary forces at the time—the U.S. capitalist rulers and the Stalinist Soviet bureaucracy—that mauled the country’s agriculture, infrastructure and society in their contest for influence, setting the undeveloped nation back decades.

Washington’s current goal is simply to prop up the warlords and other reactionary bourgeois forces who are least antithetical to its interests, at minimal cost.

100,000 South African miners on strike

Continued from front page

wages by about 500 rand (\$57) by moving many workers up one pay grade. AngloGold’s operations have been totally shut down by the strike.

The company gave thousands of strikers an ultimatum to return to work under the new offer by Oct. 24 or be fired, saying that workers’ demands to increase their wages from 8,000 rand (\$927) a month to between 12,500 and 18,500 a month “are totally unaffordable.”

AngloGold’s mines in South Africa are the deepest in the world. Miners often have to walk more than a mile to their work site after traveling up to an hour and a half down the mine elevators.

“It’s basically hell down there,” miner Tshepo Motloi, on strike since Sept. 25, told the *Militant* in a phone interview from near Carletonville. “The ventilation is inadequate and a whole lot of people get sick from TB. It’s so hot, sometimes I drink six liters of water a day. I’ve witnessed people die from heat stroke, but still production has to go on.”

“A qualified miner earns about 8,000 rand a month for working 12 to 16 hours a day, which is totally peanuts for the air and dust that you breathe,” Motloi said. “You put out gold that’s going to make somebody else rich, but you cannot get proper health care for your children, you cannot give your wife what she deserves.”

At least a dozen AngloGold strikers have been arrested by the cops over the last week, including strike committee leader Solly Malejane, who is charged with incitement of violence. “That’s an apartheid era law that the government is using now,” Motloi noted. Malejane was released Oct. 23.

“I’m not saying that the miners make a lot of money,” AngloGold spokesperson Alan Fine said in an Oct. 22 phone interview, “but real wages have increased 2.8 percent a year since the advent of democracy in 1994,” referring to the elections that marked the end of the white supremacist regime in South Africa and brought the African National Congress to power.

Fine claimed that AngloGold “has made a lot of progress” lowering rates of silicosis, a debilitating disease especially prevalent among gold miners. More than 288,000 miners in the country suffer from the disease.

Fine admitted that miners with silicosis who can no longer work don’t get paid. Instead, they receive a lump sum equal to two weeks pay for each year of service. Although by law they are supposed to get free medical treatment, Fine said, since most of the mines

Over the course of more than a decade of war in Afghanistan and the borders of Pakistan, U.S. forces have honed their technology and craft of aerial drone assassination. The *Washington Post* reports Oct. 24 that Washington is closing in on its 3,000th kill, the vast majority in Pakistan.

The *Post* adds that the Obama administration is expanding what it delicately calls a “disposition matrix”—the list of those around the world they have targeted for assassination. “The government expects to continue adding names to kill or capture lists for years,” the paper says.

Washington has expanded its forces in Africa and is engaged in a massive shift of military resources toward encircling China, its main competitor for economic markets, forging military blocs with others in Asia along the way.

The bosses’ two candidates for U.S. president, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, have no substantive differences on these matters. At bottom, either aspirant will do whatever the propertied rulers tell them to do, at home and abroad.

Workers need our own foreign policy—to unify the toilers worldwide against their national capitalist rulers and strengthen our ability to fight to overthrow their rule.

U.S. troops out of Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, South Korea, Guantánamo—out of every corner of the globe!

are in rural areas “that doesn’t really work out particularly well for them.”

When asked if the company would negotiate with the strike committee selected by the workers, Fine said that the company was aware of the committees, “but we don’t have any kind of approach to them in formal terms.”

Miners’ ‘benefits’

Some 19,000 workers at two out of three mines owned by Gold Fields that had been on strike since September, returned to work by Oct. 18, the company said. But not 8,500 workers at the company’s KDC East mine, who went on strike Oct. 14 demanding that 100 workers arrested by the cops during their previous one-week strike in September be released and charges against them dropped.

Gold Fields, the fourth largest gold mining company in the world, said it would move workers to a higher pay grade than they had before the strike, but has also fired 1,500 workers who did not show up by the company’s deadline.

“Let’s look at the economic reality,” Gold Fields spokesman Sven Lunsche told the *Militant*. “Many foreign investors, including from the U.S., are selling their shares. The labor situation of the last few months is unsustainable. If it continues you will see more than half the mines shut down.”

“The miners earn more than the majority of South Africans and get lots of benefits,” he claimed, including free housing if the miners live in company-owned hostels.

But the single-sex hostels are hated by mineworkers. Motloi said that “three or four sleep in one room. It’s regimented. You get in line to get food, you take whatever they give.”

The miners have faced opposition to the strikes by officials of the government-allied National Union of Mineworkers and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

In a summary of decisions taken at an Oct. 15-16 conference, the COSATU Central Executive Committee blamed the wave of strikes on what it called Impala Platinum’s “foolish step” of agreeing to an 18 percent wage increase for some workers at its mines following an unprotected strike in February.

On Oct. 16, the 1,800 miners at Petra Diamond’s Cullinan mine went back on strike demanding a pay increase to 12,500 rand a month. They had ended a short sit-in strike early in the month at the request of the NUM leadership.

Afghanistan war

Continued from front page

the negotiations seek to keep U.S. troops there for “counterterrorism operations and training and advising the Afghan security forces.”

U.S. special operations forces will comprise the vast majority of these troops. Though numbers have not yet been disclosed, “American military officials say that the planning figure is 25,000 troops,” stated *New American*.

At the same time, U.S.-led NATO forces have not been faring so well in Afghanistan, as they scale down their operations after more than 11 years of war.

Attacks by the Taliban have become more aggressive. On Sept. 14, for example, 15 Taliban soldiers disguised in U.S. army uniforms got inside Camp Bastion, a major U.S. air base in southern Afghanistan’s Helmand province. They killed two Marines, wounded nine other people and destroyed six Harrier fighter jets.

U.S. soldiers and other NATO troops are being attacked by some of the very Afghan forces they’re training. Since mid-September 51 NATO troops have been killed through nearly three dozen “insider attacks,” reported ABC News. That same month U.S. special operations forces temporarily suspended the training of Afghan Local Police recruits.

The last of the 33,000 “surge” troops sent to Afghanistan by the Obama administration in 2009 were fully withdrawn in September, leaving 68,000 U.S. troops still on the ground there.

“As the American surge ends, the Taliban surge will begin,” Mohammad Naim Lalai Amirzai, an Afghan parliament member from Kandahar, told the *New York Times*.

Other nations fighting under the NATO banner have about 32,000 troops there, with most heading for the exits.

British Defense Secretary Philip Hammond announced a speedup in withdrawing the U.K.’s 9,500 troops from Afghanistan, all of whom are scheduled to leave by the end of 2014. He said 500 will be brought home this year and “thousands, not hundreds” would be withdrawn late in 2013.

The German military is pulling out 500 troops from a major base it constructed eight years ago in Faizabad, in northern Afghanistan. With the third largest force under NATO command, Berlin had 4,900 soldiers stationed in the country.

French President François Hollande said that 2,000 of its 3,400 troops there will be pulled out by the end of this year. Some 1,400 troops will stay longer to send equipment back to France and train Afghan forces.

Some U.S. generals are seeking stays past the 2013 summer “fighting season” before additional U.S. troops are withdrawn. This would run counter to a plan being considered by the White House “to pull 10,000 more troops out by the end of December,” reports the *Atlantic*, “and then 10,000 to 20,000 more by next June.”

As many as 128,000 people in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including 60,000 civilians, have been directly killed by U.S., NATO and Pakistani forces since the war began, according to the costofwar.org project. Possibly several times that have died from destruction of infrastructure and lost access to food and health care. More than 1 million have been displaced.

As the war grinds on and imperialist governments thin out their forces the war is taking a toll on U.S. and NATO soldiers. While some 2,100 U.S. soldiers have been killed and tens of thousands wounded in combat, the psychological effects are perhaps even greater and mounting. The war experience has led to a high suicide rate among U.S. troops—an average of one a day for the first five months of this year, about 50 percent more than those killed in action in Afghanistan over this same period, reports the Associated Press.

Correction

In the article “‘Put Millions to Work Building What We Need’: Socialist Candidate Talks with N. Carolina Youth” in the Oct. 29 issue of the *Militant*, the question by William Dobbins to James Harris was incorrectly paraphrased. Dobbins asked Harris if he could “point to any specific economic indicators to back his claims that the U.S. economy was currently getting worse or about to get worse in the near future.”